

Celeste Newbrough
Interviewed by Marie Kochaver
San Francisco Politics and Events, 1977-1982
April 2001

Transcribed: Loren Basham

Marie Kochaver: We are here today on April 4th, the year 2001. Finally doing an interview. I am Marie Kochaver working with the oral history project of the Northern California Lesbian Gay Historical Society and I am at the home of Celeste Newbrough in Berkeley.

Celeste Newbrough: Hi, Marie.

M: Hi, Celeste. Celeste I have wanted to do this with you for a long time. What we are going to start with is to just to find out when and where you were born and a little bit of your background and for today we'll concentrate on some of your time in Northern California.

N: OK. Well my name I Celeste Newbrough. I was born in the City of New Orleans in 1939. I was an activist from a fairly early age and was involved sporadically in civil rights. A little bit in the peace movement, feminism, a very powerful impact upon me and very much involved in the feminist second wave. My own involvement began around '68 and went on from there. In 1976, I moved to San Francisco and it was in San Francisco that I became very much involved in the gay/lesbian movement or gay rights movement, and later also was involved in some feminist agitation.

M: OK. I want to just get a little bit of personal background since we're recording for the Center of Sexual Minorities about your identification or just the beginnings of your personal history as a lesbian, bisexual or queer.

N: I could talk on this subject forever and we don't want to talk forever about it so we'll try to encapsulate it. As far as you've mentioned the word "queer" I think that I am just at the very beginnings, at the age of 62, of beginning to identify in any way with the term "queer." When I was younger it to me was a word that was used in a derogatory and an insulting way. It's only recently that I have realized that it has this kind of power to it in identifying a lot of different people by the characteristic that we really all have in common: we're queer. And so I am beginning to embrace it, but I certainly did not when I was younger.

I would say that my first stirrings of attraction to other women occurred in early adolescence and continued unabated and swelled throughout adolescence and early adulthood. I was also, in high school, very much in the closet and very outwardly heterosexual. In my early 20s I was very bisexual in the sense that I was always becoming emotionally involved with women, and men were always after me and it was sort of like this catch-22 vicious circle. During which time I managed to become pregnant and had a birth child. I finally began to find my way out of the mists of, when I was about 25, and I pretty much began to totally identify as a lesbian at that point. And after several

fairly intense but short relationships I finally fell in love with a woman, and it was mutual, and that lasted for about five years and then I fell madly in love with another woman and that was mutual and that lasted for three years and then we spent maybe another two years breaking up. During that two years I would say I went through another phase of active bisexuality and that during that period of time my relationships with men were far more satisfactory and successful. And I think that that actually from sort of from about 1973 through 1976. So that for about a three year period I was basically a bisexual woman who identified as a lesbian, but understood for felt that I really had a choice. And then I became, for whatever reason, turned away from men and became exclusively oriented toward women. I think perhaps it may have coincided with my more intense political involvement in the gay movement.

In 1978 I fell in love with the woman that I currently live with. We have been in a very long-term relationship. That is sort of the way that I would say that I identify as a lesbian and that is the way that my lesbianism has been interwoven itself in my life. At times it has included some heterosexual behavior and back in my younger years which were the early '60s I was very promiscuous both with men and with women.

M: Yeah. Thank you. I have know you for just the last few years now and there is just one more thing before we get up to San Francisco which is to pinpoint at what point you were very publicly out because I understand that you were and at what point was that in your life?

N: I was publicly out basically from the time that I began as a key organizer of the feminist movement in New Orleans, which was in '68. I basically never made any, I never attempted to conceal my lesbianism. Everyone who knew me knew that I was a lesbian and that included, as time went on, a lot of people. I actually, even though it was fairly well known that I was a lesbian, I actually publicly came out as a lesbian in 1974 at a speech after the upstairs fire in New Orleans. It was a gay nightclub. The two people that they asked, there was a big meeting before the city council, I really am not sure what the focus of the meeting was, I think it was a sympathetic meeting. It was something that wanted to provide some kind of perspective in testimony to the role of gay culture in New Orleans. By that time Stonewall had happened and had become a real issue. New Orleans has been know for being an island of liberalism in the midst of a quagmire of conservatism. And so two people were asked to speak before the city council at this meeting. One was Bill Rushton, he was the editor of *Vieux Carre Courier*, a gay man and the other was me, who had at that time become fairly well known through my feminist involvements. And so I got up in front of the city council and said "My name is Celeste Newbrough and I am a lesbian. And it was covered on television and I remember my aunt said something about "Oh, you look just so beautiful on television when I saw you." So it was sort of like to some extent I guess I was coming out to some people in my family where it had never been openly spoken.

M: Now about how and why did you arrive in California?

N: I came to San Francisco because at that time I was in Vermont and I was freezing to death and catching a bad cold and my big sister lived here and she was a lesbian and she invited me to come and live with her for the winter. I loved Vermont, at that time, and I felt that I wanted to go back there.

Do you want to test to see how our interview is going? OK. I am getting nervous you told me not to about the sound, but it's just that you turned it off so I was concerned.

When I came to San Francisco I remember that at that time she was living on the top of Alvarado Street, which is at the top of the Castro hill or Noe hill and right off of Castro Street and I remember she took me to this sort of peak on Noe hill where I could see the City and then walked me down to the Mission and I just had a sense of the incredible vitality of the City and that regardless, it wasn't so much a positive feeling at that time it was just a knowledge that I had to be there, I had to go on being there. So I went on being there and I moved from her place to the top of Twin Peaks and then into the upper Mission and finally onto Castro Street where I lived at the 900 block of Castro Street with two other lesbians. I was very identified at that point as an artist. I was very concerned about, I gave some poetry readings, I was involved with other women poets. I wanted to especially mention two of them. One, Lynn Leneadia (sp?) who did not really know that well personally, but I have honored her a great deal as a poet and would like to think it was mutual but we did not really see that much of her. She was a wonderful poet that did a book called *Lesbian Estate* that was published by Paul Mariah of Manroot Press.

M: Could you spell her name?

N: L-Y-N-N L-O-N-I-D-I-E-R. And she also wrote another book called *Clitoris Lost* and may have written many others but those are the two that I know about. Then there was a woman named Karen and I am wracking my brain for her last name but I cannot think of her last name. She was one of the two organizers of Radical Women and she was a poet and she died in the early to mid-eighties. I am not sure of what but she became very ill. She was a very good poet and she was also an extremely political person and she and I were closer friends. I went to a lot of meetings of Radical Women at that time. I had been very much a coalitionist before then as a feminist and even though I identified as a radical feminist I had not necessarily identified that much with the left. I think that being a part of Radical Women was a way of trying to explore intellectually how I felt about that and where I stood with the interaction with Marxism and feminism and so forth. It was a really fun, sort of cerebral, organization and group.

M: I understand they refer to their movement as a key part of the socialist/feminist movement and they are still around.

N: And they are still around. I actually went up to their national meeting in Seattle. Maybe in early '77, or something. The main thing that I remember was that it was a very huge meeting and that they read the history of Radical Women and of the socialist, I

forgot the exact name of the party that they were associated with. They were associated with ...

M: Freedom Socialist Party.

N:: Yeah, Socialist Freedom Party, or something, or Freedom Socialist. And there was just this whole two or three hour session on the history where every single solitary person who had ever had anything to do with the party and the organization was mentioned. Even if they had just gone in and thrown tomatoes and left or something. I remember feeling in some ways how wonderful that was because my sense of the feminist movement at that time and to some extent the gay movement -- to the extent that I was a lesbian feminist, I had been involved with it and in it -- as that it was much more sort of spontaneous and episodic, and that people had a way of sort of falling off into the horizon. Which to some extent I think is interesting in that now after all these years there is a real strong emphasis on oral history. Which is good. But that's one thing that I remembered about it, and another was that I remember that everyone stood up and sang the *Communist Internationnale*, and that while I was singing it I felt kind of prickly with chills up and down my spine as though I really was doing something that at some level I really didn't believe in. And yet, I felt a sense of solidarity with the people, so I just went right on singing it at the top of my voice, to the extent that I knew the words.

Let's see, you can interrupt at any time, but I did want to say something about San Francisco at that time, it was '76 and '77. Early '77.

It was just the most incredible city. I remember that when we lived in this apartment on Castro Street we had a back yard and we could see all of these balconies, you know the backs of all these apartments. Everywhere you looked there were always just dozens of nude people, mostly men, just kind of hanging around on the balconies. And everyone was just out getting the sunlight. And there was a tremendous amount of light drugs, I mean grass was everywhere. People were extraordinarily creative. You would walk on a corner of Castro Street or Polk Street and there would be, not some musician who knew how to play a few notes and was doing it for money, but just an extraordinarily fine performance artist, or a group of artists, who would be on the corner. I remember I went to several concerts including a Lilly Tomlin performance and I think a concert of Margie Adams and Chris Williamson at the Palace of Fine Arts and the clowns were everywhere. I remember that, I actually don't have the graphic, but I would like to be able to scan it and contribute it to the archives. I remember doing a portrait of a gay man, I guess we don't have time for me to look for it but we should, because this is one of the most, it is just a little pen and ink drawing, but it is just incredibly opulent. I was trying to emphasize the soft, amiable, opulence of this gay man. Who, to me at that time, was a kind of archetype of the Castro Street man. Extremely well off, super healthy, not a care in the world, creative. And that was my sense of gay men at that time in San Francisco.

M: Celeste, would it be helpful for us to stop and find it to see it right now?

N: Why not.

[Pause]

M: OK, what I can see here is a small duplication of piece you are talking about and he looks vibrant and bushy-haired and kind of inward and happy.

N: Yeah. I think that was the way many gay men were at that time. In some ways, dealing with the odyssey of my own homophobia, I don't think I ever had so much internalized homophobia in the sense that I was homophobic against lesbians or against my own lesbianism, but I think I was definitely homophobic against, you know, in terms of gay men. When I was younger in New Orleans I felt they were sort of fluffy-headed. I didn't understand even though I always had good friends who were gay men, I basically didn't understand who they were, why they were who they were, and what they really had to offer to society and culture. I think it was when I came to San Francisco that I realized just what it meant to be a gay male and to create a gay male culture. One incident, leaping ahead of myself a little bit, I remember after a meeting I walked, we came back very late from the meeting, it must have been maybe two o'clock in the morning. It was a Saturday evening. I and a lesbian that I was going with at that time walked down Castro Street to get back home to my place on 19th and Castro, and we must have walked past 10,000 men who were hanging out on Castro Street. The wonderful thing was that I felt, with her, we were holding hands, walking down the street, and we were virtually the only women there and yet, we were not afraid. I remember feeling a sense of exhilaration that in no other city, and under no other circumstances would I have been able to walk past so many men and not feel afraid. And I didn't. So that was a wonderful thing. It was a gentle, beautiful culture. I think people called it the San Francisco Renaissance. The Castro Street had so many more creative shops and everything than it does now. It was a different scene then.

M: How did this new experience with gay men and their culture affect your activism.

N: Well, I would say it didn't affect it at all until, in some extent there was even a reverse effect, until the Anita Bryant incident arose.

M: Which was?

N: Well, lets say, we know it was in 1977 and it was very early in '77. It may have even been in late '76. But I think it was in early '77. We'll have to check on the date. I remember that at that time I was writing, and I had this tendency to have the radio on and the television on at the same time; the television without sound. For some reason this gave me a kind of stimulus. I had classical music on and I had a little bitty place where I had my desk and everything. And so I had all this stimulus coming to me, and I remember looking up and seeing this woman's face. It was a close-up of her face. And she did not look happy. She was talking in a rather pained way. It kept on. It was not a commercial, I realized it was not a commercial, so I sort of looked at the time and I realized it was like 5:32 or something and this was the national news. So, I turned it up.

And it was Anita Bryant and she was talking about how terrible gay people were and how they should find the right way before they went to Hell, etc. Then they switched it to these two men in San Francisco. And they were two sort of lavishly dressed gay men with crew cuts, which was not even that typical, because there were many gay men with long hair and who wore drag in a very nice kind of way, not exaggerated way, but a very nice kind of way like Teddy Matthews, for example. But in this case there were two sort of upright looking crew cut guys and they said something in so many words that she was full of s_ _ _ , except they said it in a nicer way. Well, I immediately became totally energized because I felt that the media was going to turn this into something between this woman and these men and that was not what it should be. And so, like, within ten minutes I was on the phone and I called the only person that I really knew at that time who was very active in the gay movement and that was Priscilla Alexander. And Priscilla and I had been actually fairly close friends before that. We had been introduced as people who, by two other women who thought we might fall in love since we were both sort of weird and cerebral, but it turned out we were not the least bit interested in each other except as friends. At that time she was the administrator for Coyote but she also knew a lot of gay men and was very much sort of steeped in that to the extent that there was activism going on she knew where it was happening.

When I called her, she said, well there is going to be a meeting tomorrow night. So I went with her to the meeting the next night and there were maybe 50 people there and it included a lot of the people who were activists, who were trying to figure out what to do. I am not sure how it happened, but I came out of the meeting as the person who was going the chair the next large meeting. I think Priscilla volunteered me, I think what happened is that someone pointed to me and said I should and Priscilla said that would be a good idea. So there was a meeting at the Gay Community Center, which was at that time run by the Pride Foundation. Paul somebody, he was an older guy, his name was Paul. He was the chair of the Pride Foundation and the Gay Community Center was across from Vorpall Gallery. I am not really sure of the street, maybe you can remember, it was basically right off of, around Gough Street.

M: I wasn't here at all, I wasn't around here.

N: OK. So it was off of Van Ness and between say Gough and Market Streets. And there was a huge, enormous meeting there, maybe 2000 people showed up. They were hanging from the rafters everywhere. That was like the day after or two days after the first meeting and so we basically spent the two days in between the first and second meeting in the state of constant organizing. I was sort of re-found my element as an organizer, because I had not really done that since I had decided that my politics was sort of beginning to get in the way of my art, and I had to really get in touch with being an artist for a while. But I got back in touch with being a political person. It felt wonderful.

M: Celeste, I am wondering when you talked about two days of constant organizing, specifically what does that mean you were doing?

N: We were, well, first of all we had to get the place and so forth, although that we pretty easy. We also wanted to develop an agenda. We were really trying to figure out how we were going to respond, what kind of groups and organizations and so forth should come out of this, what the possibilities were and the options to present to the people who came. I remember that we actually wrote up a statement that was, we thought, about the idea of organizing an umbrella group – like a mass organization – that would be either called the Coalition for Human Rights or the Coalition for Gay Rights. That was one of the huge debates at the meeting itself whether it should be the Coalition for Human Rights or the Coalition for Gay Rights. There was a tremendous amount of debate on that. We had pretty much drawn up a roster of a key leadership group to present to the people who came to the meeting. Because we wanted something to come out of the meeting. People were going to be coming from everywhere and we wanted to have as much organization as possible. We didn't want to tell people what was going to happen but we wanted to have options for people to consider and we wanted to come out of that meeting with an organization, that was our major purpose. So there were people who were writing up, there were various people who were writing up speeches and giving different aspects of gay history -- someone talked about Stonewall, someone talked about, we were trying to develop immediately I was very interested in getting women involved, we got in touch with the Womens' Center, we got Roma Guy to talk she was with the Womens' Center I am not sure that the Womens' Foundation had been organized by that time but she was a key organizer of the Womens' Center. So that's the kind of stuff that was going on it was just very much embroiled.

(End of tape 1, side 1)

(Tape 1, side 2, Celeste Newbrough)

M: I am going to tag it again. This is Marie Kochaver interviewing Celeste Newbrough on April 4, 2001. We are in Berkeley, California. And Celeste, you were talking about a couple of meetings in San Francisco that occurred in early 1977, possibly late 1976, we haven't pinpointed. I would like to hear a little about that second meeting and what the results were.

N: Well, the more I think about it the more I am pretty sure it was early '77. But, it was an outpouring of people that just came in response to the Anita Bryant, the episode of her coming out making political statements against gay people. Prior to that time she had been sort of the orange juice queen of Florida.

M: I am quickly going to ask, had she come here?

N: No.

M: OK, her base was in Florida?

N: Right. She did not come here. So for whatever reason I just think there was just an incredible amount of energy there. Gay people were ready. We had in many ways sort of

mobilized a lot of energy and we were ready to expend it politically and this was like a firecracker that turned into a bomb. That's the way that I felt.

At the meeting, it was a huge coalition, it had everything from the absolute far left, as far left as you could get in San Francisco which is probably as far left as you can get in the United States, to people whose only prior political investment had been maybe going to a Gay Freedom Day Parade in drag, or something. Everyone was there. Everyone was trying to get along and it was interesting because there were some issues that people were divided over. One of them of course was the issue of the title of "human rights" versus "gay rights." And there was a lot of debate on that and I remember at one point the meeting got to be so tumultuous that I turned the mike over to Clyde who was a young very beautiful young black man who was my backup in chairing the meeting. I just gave it to him and said "Clyde, see what you can do to calm these people down." So he took it and to some extent, I just remember my personal emotions during that time were that I really felt like I was a medium that was being used and that I felt wonderful about being used and that I was completely attuned to the energy of the crowd and that was the most important thing. To be able to be attuned to that energy, to guide it, and at times having to control it, but I think when I had to control it, I turned it over to Clyde to control.

I remember at the end of the meeting that a red headed man came up on stage and put his arm around me and he said: I want you to know that this girl ... At that time of course among feminists there was a real issue over whether you were called a girl or a woman and so I had to say, "excuse me, I am a woman." When I said that, a lot of women in the crowd just started cheering. And so he was a little bit abashed, because what he was going to say was that he thought I had done a great job. He said "OK, this woman has done a great job." And then I put my arm around him and we sort of embraced and I thanked him and everything. But it was like that period of time was the first time, even though women had been involved in gay rights before and even though some gay men had been involved with feminism, this was the first time that in very large numbers, feminist women were coming out, lesbian feminist women, were coming out to work with gay men. So the co-sexual aspect was really very powerful. Leading up to the 1977 parade which was for the first time you had a really co-sexual representation in the crowd. Masses of women came out and they were not as well represented on the stage. It was not until 1978 that women and men absolutely shared equally on the stage, in terms of participation and leadership, etc.

M: What about the, for a minute, getting back to that meeting at a pivotal time. What would people say, since you brought it up, about the proportion of men to women? I am curious now.

N: I don't remember anyone talking about the proportion of men to women. I remember women talking about the comparative situation of men and women. That we would go to meetings at men's houses or men's apartments and we would go to meetings in women's houses and women's apartments and invariably at that time there seemed to be a kind of a class difference. That the men's apartments were larger more opulent, etc. That could

very well have been also the result of the fact that men put more energy into their own homes as opposed to the women. But I think that most of the stuff, to the extent that there were feelings going on, I think it had to do with the mannerisms of speech, men learning that there were certain things that were really not OK to do around women. Women having to deal, lesbians having to deal really with their own homophobia and realizing that we really weren't giving gay men, that we were giving them too much short shrift in terms of who they were and what they were about. Lesbians trying to understand the promiscuous spirit that was rampant at that time among gay men. I began to understand it as a kind of strange brotherhood -- that was a way that I could make sense of it.

M: It also made me curious when you talked about this broad participation that showed up this meeting in response to Anita Bryant, what some people called crusade, or whatever. I am thinking of church and religious people at that time. To what extent was that part or not part of this broad coalition?

N: I think that Paul, who was the chair of Pride, was a fairly religious person. And that some of the, that maybe Dignity may have already been around, I am not sure. I remember less of that than I do of the actual political differences. The fact that there was a very strong participation by the left wing and the various groups of the left wing at that time.

M: I am waiting what the name came out to be.

N: Well, the name came out to be the Coalition for Human Rights. As we had more or less presented as a roster, the two first co-chairs were Priscilla Alexander and, (sound) I can't remember his name. Bill was his first name, William. He wrote a book on LSD and used to teach at UC Berkeley and then became a gardener. He lived in a house in Berkeley that later when he moved to Hawaii, Whoopi Goldberg moved into. It's near downtown Berkeley. He was a very delightful person and someone who I was friends with. I don't remember his last name, his first name was Bill. We then moved on to a lot of political stuff and one of the main focuses of our politics had to do with Walter Mondale. Now, you may have to help me refresh my own memory as to what that was about but Walter Mondale was coming to California. It may have been that it was the beginning of the Briggs Initiative.¹ I don't think so, though. I think there was something going on with the Carter/Mondale administration. And we demonstrated when Walter Mondale came to California. We demonstrated outside, he spoke at a downtown hotel in San Francisco, what is the old one, St. Francis? There was a demonstration at the airport and there was a demonstration outside the hotel and it was just a huge big thing. We had lots of rallies. At this point in time I do not remember the subject matter. I remember that the subject matter that became more and more important as 1977 waned on and into 1978, was the Briggs Initiative. But I think that the Briggs Initiative came later. That Briggs actually sponsored the initiative after Anita Bryant's crusade. That it was part of the whole right wing reaction against gay rights and that that did not happen until maybe summer of '77 or something.

¹ Carter and Mondale had not yet publicly opposed the initiative.

Whatever the issue was there was a lot of agitation and demonstration around Walter Mondale.

M: The Briggs Initiative, as I remember hearing about it, was a state-wide ballot initiative in California that would have banned gay people....

N: Or anyone that advocated it, would have banned anyone who advocated rights for gays and it could have included a heterosexual person that advocated gay rights, or it could have meant that any gay person who was discovered being gay would be implicated, that he therefore was promoting gay rights. So it was a very broad general initiative.

M: They would not be allowed to be...?

N: They would not be allowed to teach in the public schools. And at that time there were many many gay teachers. I was also going to say that another area of energy had to do with Harvey Milk. I believe that Harvey Milk was elected in '77 like around October, November of '77, so that there was a lot of energy going into campaigning for him.

I think a lot of it had to do with actually responding to Anita Bryant. There were a lot of statements made, there were several spokespeople that we had selected including Priscilla, myself, Gwinn, I don't remember Gwinn's last name but she was a young black woman who later became an aid to Harvey Britt....

M: Harry Britt

N: Harry Britt, I'm sorry, and Walter Cohen was very active at that time. He was campaigning for Milk. He later became the aid to Milk. He was actually a very strong powerful activist. He was an attorney.

M: Can you spell his last name?

N: C-O-H-E-N, Walter. And unfortunately, I think in 1979 Walter was arrested and actually served a jail sentence for, I don't know if it was '79, I think it was maybe '82 or '83, actually, maybe '83, that he served a jail sentence for supposedly taking funds away from his lover, or his friend, who had died of AIDS. It was an early AIDS scandal. It's hard for me to incorporate that into my vision of who Walter was. He was a very generous person who helped people and always brought food and you could always go to his office and meet. He may have felt that he really deserved it, something, but that it was not formal enough to satisfy the law.

But anyway, he was very active at that time. Cleve Jones was very active at that time. There was another, there was a man who was active in democratic politics and also in socialist, it was not the Socialist Workers Party, it was the party that was more Leninist in it's approach. The Socialist something party.² And it was basically, they were

² Bill _____

Leninists. He and I, and I don't remember his name now, he also died of AIDS. He and I clashed somewhat because he believed that the purpose of the political "elite" was lead the masses or something. You know, to control the masses. I was not at that level of theory anyway and I was basically a coalitionist who felt that it was good to give people options and to listen to what they wanted to do. But he was a very effective person, he really was. I wish I could remember his name.

Roger Brooks was a person who increasingly became a part of my life. He was a wonderful activist. He had been a Vietnam war veteran. Then turned against the war. I think he was then living in Hawaii at the time. So that he was a kind of a big media star for a while in Hawaii as an anti-war veteran. He was just a lovely person. I used to be able to go over and always have dinner at his house and his lover was Larry. I actually have there in the photographs that I have for you, if you want me to show you them, I can open it up and see if I can get that out.

So this is Roger and Larry and me. This was actually in 1979. I should write on it. It was 1979 Gay Freedom Day and Larry, I don't remember Larry's last name but Larry was one of the major leaders. He became one of the major leaders of the Briggs Initiative because he was a teacher in Sonoma County. He was a spokesperson and one of the key leaders of the anti-Briggs Initiative movement. Again, they were both wonderful men.

I am sort of getting a little ahead of myself or astray or something.

M: Do you want to go back to a timeline?

N: Well, I did want to go back a little bit to 1977. The women coming out, lots of women came out and yet it was still basically a male oriented celebration. Among the gay men, ...

M: You're talking about the gay parade?

N: Gay Freedom Day, right. Among the gay men there was a young, sort of the old established gay men like Paul, who was in charge of Pride and the Gay Community Center as opposed to the "young Turks," who included Harvey Milk and Cleve Jones, and this guy that I can't remember, the Leninist Democrat person. And gradually the young Turks began to really take control and they were much more politicalized and much more focused and less oriented toward cultural kinds of things and more oriented toward getting involved in established politics and getting laws passed and so forth.

One other thing that I wanted to say about 1977 was that at the end of the day I went to a ritual at Golden Gate Park, which was a coven ritual, both men and women participated. It was just really beautiful; it was at sundown and the woman who led the ritual was Batya Podos. And Batya Podos, I think she may have moved to Greece or something, she actually was a Greek American.

M: Could you spell that one for me?

N: B-A-T-Y-A P-O-D-O-S. And Batya, one of the most amazing cultural events that I remember in '77 was Batya's production of *Les Gueriere*, which was a Monique Wittig (sp?), which was one of the first major works coming into the second wave. It was a Nobel Prize winning novel. And Batya put it on stage. Monique Wittig was actually there to attend the production. It was unbelievable. I think it may have even been '76, but, no it was '77. It was at the theater is a well known underground San Francisco theater, I can't quite think of the name of it right now, maybe it will come to me. I think it's even still in operation. She was just a really fine artist and also a heavy-duty witch. She led the ritual. It was at that time that I decided that I had to become a leader in the next year's Gay Freedom Day because I wanted Batya to give the invocation. That was really my main motivation even though I am sure that there were many others as well.

To some extent in the kind of con..., I don't know if you would say there was a conflict, but in the sort of tension at that time between the cultural expression of what it meant to be gay and the political fight for gay rights, I think that really they went together. That at there highest, they went together. There was also a lot of tension around that and to the extent that there was tension, I think that I tended to, even though I completely understood the political part of it, I tended to really identify more with the cultural efflorescence or the expression of the political through the cultural, rather than just nakedly political, purely political. I think that that entire year going from 1977 into 1978 was, in terms of my own focus, and I think to some extent to a lot of other people's, it was this channeling of the political through the cultural.

I think that something like 9 months before the parade, or maybe 8 months before the parade, I was put on salary as the coordinator of the Gay Freedom Day Parade. And then Chris,³ I should be strung up by my thumbs by not remembering last names, but I just don't remember his last name. I can show you his picture and I have his picture and somebody will. He was the co-chair with me of Gay Freedom Day. He was not a salaried coordinator, but he was a very active co-chair. He was a young man, very handsome, very committed charming person.

M: "K" or "C"?

N: "C", C-H-R-I-S. The other person in the picture....

M: You were co-chairs of the parade committee and then you were ...?

N: A full time salaried coordinator.

M: The full time coordinator.

N: Going into to 1978 parade, were some of the events that took place from that point on. Some of the cultural innovations that have been identified with the Gay Freedom Day ever since then, or for a very long period of time, some of them have now faded, began

³ Chris Perry (?)

during that period of great energy and organization '78. And that included the Gay Freedom Day Flags, which were primarily the inspiration of two people: Gilbert, you know I am sure, Gilbert's last name.

M: Baker?

N: Right, Gilbert Baker, a tremendously talented man and Fairrie Argyle, who was a young artist and I think a bisexual and the two of them worked, I worked with them. We somehow got money, we got material. Gilbert and Fairrie designed them, they were both very much involved, although Gilbert was involved in so many other things at that time.

M: Spell Fairrie

N: F-A-I-R-R-I-E, that was how she spelled her name. And the last name is A-R-G-Y-L-E, Argyle. Out of that came the magnificent flags that were flown and I think are still flown on Gay Freedom Day. I think a few may have, may have come into being since then, but the standard flags that have been there forever were done in the 1978 parade.

M: They're up all along Market Street for a whole month now.

N: Right. The Gay Freedom Day Marching Band, that was just a big kick to people to see for the first time, everybody out. I don't remember, I know that the Gay Male Chorus was all male. I don't remember whether the Gay Freedom Day Marching Band was all male or not. I think that it may have been but I am not sure.

Again there is a name that I want to (let's turn this off while I think).

M: OK, Celeste, you don't remember the name of the leader right now, but that's OK.

N: His last name was Ballou,⁴ I think. Hopefully we'll get that.

I just wanted to go through a few more. He was, as far as I knew anyway, one of the key organizers of the Gay Freedom Day Marching Band. Then there was the Gay Freedom Day Chorus, which really became very well known. I think later they changed their name so that they could play all around the world in different concerts and perhaps not quite hit so many strings of homophobia or knee jerk reactions. But they actually changed their name.

M: You're saying they actually took the word "gay" out of it?

N: Yeah. And actually sang all over the place event though everybody knew they were gay, for some reason they took "gay" out of it and it made it more, people were able to invite them to more places.

⁴ Tandy Ballou

Anyway, of course the witch's ritual which was in the parade and ended at Golden Gate Park and I think that Sistah Boom began in 1978. Which was the Women's Drum Corp. And of course, Dykes on Bikes, I think Dykes on Bikes had been involved in '77 but they really made a huge, they really became what they are today with this huge contingent. But, of course, they are no longer called Dykes on Bikes, they are called the Women's Motorcycle Club. At that time I would say that there were several inspirational spirits but the one that I knew the best and whose name I can remember was Glenn McIlhenny, a very young, beautiful woman who later, I think in '79 or '80 she and Gilbert Baker went to the Black and White Ball together both in drag, her in a tux and he in an evening gown and they made quite a show there.

M: How do you spell her name?

N: G-L-E-N-N-E M-C-I-L-H-E-N-N, I think it was either "Y" or "EY", I am not sure which one.

M: These were all pretty much innovations of that year?

N: Of that year. Because it was just this enormous huge parade and I do want to get to some more people that were involved, but maybe this would be an opportune time to talk about the fact that this parade was just getting to be huge and enormous. And unquestionably there were a half a million people. Now at this point they have well over a million people going to the parade but its usually a much more scattered thing than it was in 1978. It just seemed to be this super-powerful stream of people that began at the top of Market near the Embarcadero and went all the way down to the celebration. It seemed in terms of its intensity and everyone being there at the same time that it didn't drag on and on and on it was just this enormous crowd and push of people.

(End of tape 1, side 2)

(Tape 2, side 1 [labeled side 3] Celeste Newbrough)

M: Side A which is labeled tape 3. This is Marie Kochaver interviewing Celeste Newbrough on April 4, the year 2001 at her home in Berkeley for the Oral History Project of the Center for the History of Sexual Diversity of San Francisco. Celeste, you were speaking from your experience as the co-chair and the coordinator of the Gay Freedom Day Parade in 1978 and you were referring to the negotiations you to do out....

N: Yes, actually coming into the time of the parade it was very clear to everyone that international attention was being focused on San Francisco and that it was just going to be huge. There were a lot of planning meetings and one of them included a meeting with the Chief of Police and I remember they had been three weeks or two weeks before the parade, but he took it upon himself to give us a lecture about the fact that we should not have so many people come. It could still be important without masses of people coming and he said, "just remember, think small." I remember about that.

M: Do you remember his name?

N: I don't remember his name. He was the Chief of Police at that time. I felt that there was not a great deal of cooperation from the police, even though it was a crowd of at least a half a million people. They did not close the streets that were crossing the parade, they did not close them off even though they were literally closed off by bands of people. But there was sort of like minimal, there was a minimal effort to accommodate the crowd and the parade itself. I think that they've gotten a lot better over the years and more cooperative because they have understood it to be more and more of a tourist event.

Going back a little bit to some of the people that I may not have mentioned. Artemis March was very much involved at that time; is a lesbian feminist helping out with the parade. She was a well known New York feminist who had done a lot of writing at that time. I don't know if she has lasted that well over time but she was very interested and committed.

The parade celebration chair was Suzanne, and I will remember Suzanne's last name one of these days. This is her picture, she is very pretty. I was actually sort of going with her at the time, my personal aside.

M: I have a question about, you mentioned the celebration now twice, where was it and how did it compare with what they call the celebration now? In terms of booths or performers?

N: The celebration was a City Hall Plaza and there was a debate as to where it was going to be which maybe we can cover a little bit more later. There were a lot of booths. I don't think it was as well boothed as it subsequently became. It was much more of a movement atmosphere so that the celebration was a giant political rally and less of a festival and more of a political rally. But, never-the-less and they were very political, they tended to be very political booths.

I just said off mike that I think that the celebrations are getting so boring that I don't want to go to them anymore. Marie said maybe you should say that. What were you going to say?

M: Oh, I am just saying that it was a good description of the difference I feel in some gatherings and events where whatever the reason the atmosphere was what you call a movement atmosphere in days past and now the atmosphere is somewhat festive and commercial; very different.

N: Very different indeed. Going back to a few other people.

Paula Lichtenberg became the chair of the No on 6, kill the Briggs Initiative, campaign and the No on 6 campaign actually fueled into the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade so that it was not only the largest contingent maybe nine to one larger than any other contingent in the parade, but it almost swallowed up the parade, it was just huge. It

was very political. All of the labor unions and all of the professional groups and of course the teachers being the main, were just out in full force and marching and everyone had posters and so forth and it gave the march a very serious highly political tone in 1978.

M: Was the vote was up coming?

N: The vote was up coming.

M: In the fall of that year? Probably November.

N: That's exactly right. That's right.

M: An how would you spell Paula Lichtenberg?

N: P-A-U-L-A L-I-C-H-T-E-N-B-E-R-G. I think it was B-E-R-G. Barbara Cameron was very active. Barbara Cameron was a Native American woman who later participated in the "Off Our Backs" anthology. She was very active.

Teddy Mathews was tremendously active. He was just a wonderfully creative person and what I remember about him most of all was that you would go to parties or meetings and he would just be in drag. It would be the most completely ordinary thing. He had his beard and he would just be wearing a woman's skirt. It was a new, to me anyway, and I think even culturally it was a new way of being in drag, for men to be in drag. Teddy Mathews was a total feminist. He was just an incredibly powerful feminist and a very political fairy.

Cleve Jones, I mentioned, I used the name "Clyde" before as the young black man, actually his name was Claude. I don't know his last name. It was C-L-A-U-D-E.

Randy Shilts was out and there was another Randy, who was another guy who wrote, Armisted Maupen was coming out to the meetings sometimes. There was another Randy besides Randy Shilts who was even more active and he was a more political kind of guy. I just remember he was very very involved and I don't know his last name. I wish I could remember it.

Let's see, I am sure that I have forgotten many many people. One of my most favorite people was "Cookie" Glen Meisenheimer. He was an engineer and a photographer and for the '78 parade he actually built a robot. He had this robot that went along that he built himself, that was walking along the street. He also took some incredible photographs that I was trying to get a hold of but I can't find him right now.

M: Can I ask you again to spell his name?

N: I think his name is spelled Glen: G-L-E-N Meisenheimer: M-E-I-S-E-N-H-E-I-M-E-R.

M: OK

N: Lets see. So some of those people were out. I did want to talk a little bit about two things having to do with the parade.

First, the Goddess float and then the debate over where it was going to be. The Goddess float will probably take less time and it is maybe a little bit of bragging or something and that was that Batya and I got together and she was going to give the invocation and she and I and some other women got together, including Suzanne, and I think Fairrie was very much involved in it and I am sure many other women. I don't remember all of their names. We did, produced, a huge float of the Goddess that included just a huge enormous statue with the cosmos. The only thing I have left of it, this was her necklace and it was a choker and you can see it was sort of made out of hammered thin bronze with all sorts of things attached. It was much prettier at the time. One of the ways....

M: Did you participate in making this particular part of....

N: I did not. I participated in more of the organizational part and some the art, but the artwork was actually done by various women including primarily Fairrie, but the person who did the bronze sculptures, I do not remember her name. She did a beautiful twisted bronze cosmos out of brass, excuse me, brass wire, that was, the diameter of it was maybe three feet and it was just a huge beautiful sculpture. I have to say that I had it for many years and it got so filthy over the years that I have put it up somewhere, I am not sure where it is. It really gathered dust. The Goddess....

M: What I see here is a crescent moon of metal, brass. Maybe not quite a foot wide and hanging from it are a bird feather, possibly a piece of bone or a shell, some parts of plant seed, and another wonder from Mother Nature that I don't know what to call.

N: Right, some sort of little marine creature, a coral almost.

M: And this was hanging...?

N: And that was hanging on her neck. It was basically a choker, so you can see how big she was and she was a kind of a smokey bluish green and had long sort of wild green hair. She was just beautiful and she was huge. We actually pulled her, I think and she got on international television and they actually covered our last night when we were building her, they covered it on the local, San Francisco, news and after they finished and went away and after we finally put the last wisp of something, you know, hair as moss on the goddess we all had a little ritual of dedication. I remember my big sister was there. She came out and Halsey, my nephew, was there and Batya. And there were about thirteen or fourteen women. Priscilla was there definitely, Priscilla was involved in that too. So that was a huge wonderful thing that kind of symbolized the influx of women into and the influx of leadership of women into the parade. It actually won the prize and I

think it was again that was the first year that they gave a prize for the best float. But I may be wrong on that, but the Goddess float won the prize for the best float.

So that was a lot of fun.

Another part of that year, parade year, that I think was interesting was there was a debate between Harvey Milk and my co-chair, Chris, as to where the parade should be held. Chris wanted the parade to be held in Golden Gate Park. Again, he was one of the culturalists even though he was political, he was a young politician, I think he was a member of the, what was the name of the gay political club that is still, not Gertrude Stein, but the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club. He was a young politician and a young Turk but he was also very much oriented toward the culture. He knew it was going to be a huge crowd and he wanted it to be kind of more reminiscent of the kind of 60s huge rock concert, counter-revolutionary thing and that was his vision and to some extent mine. Although mine was not necessarily tied into Golden Gate Park.

Harvey Milk, on the other hand felt that it must be at City Hall, it had to be at City Hall. It had to be a direct political statement especially because of the Briggs Initiative.

M: Now what was his at that time was he ...?

N: He was elected by that time.

M: On the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco? My other questions is about this location question, where had it been the year before?

N: The year before it was at City Hall. So anyway, we took a vote on it and at that time, this may say a little bit about myself and who I am politically, and that is that I tend to be very people oriented, that I have a certain range of convictions, but within that range I can be very much influenced by the people that I am most interested in working with or feel that it's most important to be in touch with, and so forth. I took Chris' side and there was a big meeting where Harvey Milk spoke very eloquently that it should be at City Hall; Chris and I think a couple of other people spoke eloquently that it should be at Golden Gate Park. I agreed with Chris that it should be at Golden Gate Park. We took a vote and Golden Gate Park won.

M: Oh.

N: As soon as Golden Gate Park won, one of the men, whose name I totally do not remember, but who was very very active, a profoundly important person involved. Came up to me after the meeting and said, "you know I am just really worried about the park. I am worried about the natural ecology of the park." And so, as soon as he said that, I began to realize that we shouldn't have it at Golden Gate Park because it might destroy it. And so I talked to Chris about it and I think that maybe what Chris realized in victory was that Harvey was right. And so we reversed the decision at the meeting of the following week and decided to have it at City Hall.

M: I am just trying to get a little picture, when you say there was a vote, as to who this was? Would this be like what we now call the Gay Pride Committee?

N: Yeah, it was the Gay Freedom Day Committee.

M: A committee of about how many?

N: Well, the committee was very open. At that time it was completely open sort of thing. As a matter of fact, probably Chris stacked it with Golden Gate Park voters, or Harvey tried to stack it with City Hall voters. It was a free flowing democratic process. Decisions were made by vote by who showed up. But because of the fact that in many cases it was very episodic who showed up and who didn't I think there were also a lot of room for direction and guidance in the people who really knew what was going on, because then they could explain to the new people etc., what the issues were and frame them as they saw them.

So we did have it at City Hall.

M: Did you feel that the sort of counter-cultural atmosphere or gathering you were picturing in Golden Gate Park was still partly able to happen?

N: I think that the parade was almost completely political except toward the end when it got to be amazingly wild in bars and everything else. The most political contingents were first and the least political were last, which I think is a kind of tradition.

M: It's the reverse now?

N: It's the reverse now. Right, exactly. I don't know if they've mixed them up a lot or if they have reversed it, as you say. But in this case it was absolutely, I think No on Briggs was the first contingent. I mean No on 6. The celebration had Holly Near, it had all the well known bands of lesbians, singers and male bands and so forth so it was very cultural and very nice. Jason the whistler was there. He did a wonderful job. But it also began with very heavy-duty speeches. One of my problems as Chris and I were co-chairing the stage and we were trying to keep a schedule going and it was very clear that the schedule was not working and I think we had allocated five minutes to Harvey and he was on for about twenty-three or twenty-four minutes and it was a wonderful speech. He actually took heterosexuals, he developed this whole thing about how heterosexuals should look at their own house, looking at the child abuse and the domestic violence and all of the rest of it. And should not the fingers so much at gay people. That was one part of his speech. Another part was coming out. That everyone needed to come out. That was one of his absolute major messages was "come out" "come out" "come out." So it was a wonderful speech but I remember Chris and I were just rolling our eyes, tearing our hair out trying to figure out how we could get Harvey to stop. He was really just milking the crowd and everybody. So it turned out that was just one of many delays. It turned out that the celebration just went on and on until about 9:00 at night. And everybody stayed. It was

actually a beautiful warm day and the sun for whatever reason cooperated by staying up for a very long time. It just went on all day.

So yeah, I think there was a kind of, that atmosphere.

M: And that would be, speaking of day, that would have been the last day of June, whatever that year.

N: The last Sunday of June.

M: The last Sunday, I mean.

N: And also, I should have mentioned that I think that the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence were just beginning at that time. They really hadn't really organized. I think that they organized during that year and in '79 made a much bigger presence but they were around. And they were very in some ways serious even though they poked a lot of fun but they were also in many ways a real convent of gay male fairies. And had some serious issues.

M: OK, Celeste, before we go on to some of the events of later in 1978, I just as you have been speaking, have wondered a little bit about that time, those times, in your experience with the amount of support and participation or hostility and problems with both the police and generally the straight people?

N: I think I have touched with the police a little bit and that is that in the '78 parade, they were not particularly cooperative. They didn't arrest us or anything.

M: You didn't experience hostility in that time period?

N: No. It was not hostile and one of the things that we did that I think was kept up as a tradition was that we developed a very very strong monitoring contingent. Where parade monitors were just everywhere.

M: Of your own?

N: Right. One of the things that we talked with the police about was that if there were difficulties that the parade monitors should try to deal with the situation first. And that if they couldn't the police would then move in, or be called in. In the '78 parade there were very very few disturbances of any kind. I remember there were a few robberies that we learned about late that evening and the next day.

The participation of straight people in the parade I feel has grown every single solitary year. This was an intensive political year and that because of the Briggs Initiative I think that the labor unions and especially with Paula and Howard. I don't know if you....

M: Are you referring to Howard Wallace?

N: I am talking about Howard Wallace who was a very strong union organizer and just a tremendously wonderful gay activist. Between Howard and Paula I think they had mobilized just an incredible numbers of straight people who came out and marched in the parade. As far a straight people coming to the parade I think, as spectators, that straight people have grown every year. Although as participants, I don't think that is necessarily true. In '78 there was probably a lot of participation by straight people.

M: OK, thank you.

N: And, of course, another innovation were the parents of gays and lesbians. I have forgotten the name of it, but that was another group that organized in '78.

M: Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays? Usually call "PFLAG."

N: Yeah. Well, I don't know if they were exactly called PFLAG at that time. I think it was more parents of gays and lesbians, I think is what they called themselves at the time. But that was a new effort for straight people to take part in the parade.

M: And there was no presence of public actions by Nazis or people I might call bible thumpers?

N: Well, wait until we get into '79. In '78, I think it was there it was definitely there. It was there in '77. It was part of the right wing oppositional groups and the Jesus sign people, "Jesus hates you people," were there, but I think that they grew every year. '79 was a much bigger year for that than '78 was. Now that's my personal perception. I don't know, someone else might have a different perception.

M: OK, let's go on to the fall of the year.

N: The fall of that year I could just say that one little aftermath of the parade to just to put sort of parenthesis was that Margo St. James, who was the founder of Coyote through Priscilla and her friendship of Priscilla became a friend of mine and invited me to, when Gay Freedom Day was over, invited me to become the community coordinator of the Hookers' Ball and the Margo St. James masquerade for Halloween. And so, it that capacity I was really in many ways sort of took along some of the entourage that was involved in the parade. I know Gilbert was very involved in it and I think maybe Fairrie was, I don't remember. But all of the gay groups and womens' groups and feminist groups were very much had a presence at that ball which was at the Cow Palace and it actually turned out, according the Variety Magazine, to be the biggest grossing event of the year. Bigger than any concert anywhere else in the country. So it was a huge event at the Cow Palace. I just have these visions. I remember Roma of the Womens' Building people and the people who were raising money for the Womens' Foundation and they were running all of the booths and Roma Guy was running a fortune telling booth and every now and then she would take off in her witches outfit and run and just get gobs and

gobs of money from all of the other booths and just had it all in her pockets and everything. So a good time was to be had by all.

Another thing of personal note is that I was told by Walter Cohen, who was Harvey Milk's assistant, major political assistant and an attorney, that the Commission on the Status of Women was looking for a director, a new director. They encouraged me to apply and so I did apply for that position. And Harvey was really, Walter and Harvey were really going to bat to get me appointed to be the director of the Commission of the Status of Women.

I took, after the ball and having applied for the director's job, I took a vacation and went to New Orleans and visited my friends and family and so forth. All of a sudden, I was at a friend's house and I got a phone call from my lover and partner, Ilona, telling me that Harvey Milk had just been assassinated. I called Priscilla and basically, I had just gotten there, I was only there for about four days or something, beginning this nice lovely vacation

(End of tape 2, side 1)

(Tape 2, side 2 [labeled side 4], Celeste Newbrough)

M: It's side B of tape 2. In an interview, I am Marie Kochaver interviewing Celeste Newbrough in Berkeley, California on April 4, the year 2001. You just spoke of hearing of the assassination of Harvey Milk in the fall of 1978.

N: I just kept calling home and being called by people at home and being in this state of shock and great unhappiness so I just took off and cut my trip short and immediately flew back. Right after the parade in 1978, another thing that had happened was that the women who had been involved in the parade as well as women who had already been politically quite profoundly active such as Dell Martin and Phyllis Lyon, Sally Gearhart, Pat Norman was beginning to become very politically active at that time. Ann Kronenberg who was Harvey Milk's aid. We had all gotten together just immediately after the parade and had organized what we called the Lesbian Caucus. I have to actually edit that because it's not exactly how it happened. A few of us had talked about having a group of political women and politically active women, a support group. But it had not really happened. When I came back, I remember just going from event to event of memorial service, funeral, etc., of Harvey and the biggest one being at the synagogue in San Francisco, that huge synagogue that's near the hospital around Golden Gate Park, I don't remember the name of the synagogue.

M: More in the vicinity of outer California Street?

N: Somewhere around in there, yeah. You know there is a hospital, maybe it's the kind of children's hospital or something. Anyway. Sally Gearhart gave the eulogy for Harvey. She had apparently done some research on a typical Jewish eulogy which always includes, which is always very humorous and which always begins with a joke and yet at

the same time of course tears at your heart in other areas. She gave the most magnificent, she was a professor of speech, she was a fabulous speaker. She gave the most magnificent speech of her life at the synagogue. At the synagogue all of the women who had sort of been running in and out and seeing each other since the end of the parade and also around Harvey Milk's death, and all of us were just kind of shocked, and to some extent I think that it's a real tribute to who he was that the women, the politically active women, and I wouldn't include Dell and Phyllis in this so much, but that many of us felt very threatened and sort of destabilized by his death. That we in some way really saw him as being a fighter for our cause and for who we were. Someone who is always going to find a place and create a place for us. We did not feel that way so much, we were scared, in addition to mourning and grieving.

We started the Lesbian Caucus at the synagogue we decided we were going to have a meeting like two or three nights from that and the Lesbian Caucus then started meeting. It was a group of really political powerhouses. I have mentioned a few. Roma Guy, of course, Sally Gearhart, Pat Norman, Anne Kronenberg, Donna Hitchens,

M: I would like just for a second to get the spelling of Ann?

N: Anne is A-N-N-E K-R-O-N-E-N-B-E-R-G.

M: OK. Donna Hitchens is H-I-T-C....

N: C-H-E-N-S.

M: E-N-S?

H: I think it was, yeah. And she, of course, later became the first director of, she is a judge now, but she also was in charge of the lesbian rights, legal rights organization for lesbians. She was the first director for that. Dell and Phyllis, we were just all there. And Jean, what was Jean's, another one, I mentioned Pat Norman. Tiana Arruda was involved in it.

M: Can we do this again?

N: Yeah. T-I-A-N-A A-R-R-U-D-A.

M: Thank you.

N: She was also a Brazilian woman poet, Brazilian-American woman poet. There were some other ones that I could think of a person who actually became very well known. She was a little small person, I can't remember her name though. It was a multicultural, perhaps not as multicultural as it should have been, but it was definitely multicultural and I am trying to think of the name of the Latina woman who was very, she was very very well known subsequently. You would know who she was. She was identified, she has been identified subsequently as being Carman. Carman Vasquez. Ruth Mahaney who

became the, along with Teddy Mathews, founded Modern Times Bookstore. Then this one little small woman whose name I can't remember, who actually was very well known, I just can't remember her name. I don't think that Gwen was very active at that time, Gwen, this young black woman who later became Harry Britt's assistant. I think she was out of town, actually at that time.

M: This could be, I'm just guessing, there was a Gwen Craig?

N: Yeah, Gwen Craig. But Gwen Craig was not in the Lesbian Caucus, but I told you that she was involved in the early part of the parade organizing in '77.

So we all got together and started meeting and really developing a pretty sort of coherent powerful power base among ourselves.

[break]

M: OK and some of you were involved in the follow-up to Harvey Milk's position as Supervisor, then.

N: That was an interesting story because I think it was you that had sent me a clipping from the recent gay paper in which someone talked about how wonderfully wise Harvey was in naming Harry Britt as his successor or something. It sounded very simple, but in point of fact, it was nowhere near that simple. I think that Harvey certainly was wise in doing what he did, but the aftermath was anything but a clean situation. Harvey left a tape in which he named, among other people, both Anne Kronenberg and Harry Britt. Immediately after Harvey's death, as part of the political klatches that were going on, that began to go on all around, the Lesbian Caucus being one of them, I am sure that many many groups that were male or co-sexual or whatever were meeting. The general energy and focus was almost unanimously, as far as I knew, in the direction of Anne Kronenberg. Anne was lifted up in a sense in the way that I think sometimes has happened in history where a great man, a great male politician, in a way that sometimes when a male king or politician or whatever, suddenly is out of the way, his wife or some, even his mistress, was Evita the wife or the mistress of.... Anyway, she is thrust forward because there is something about putting all this interest in a woman while the focus can be on her while the real fights for power can be going on underneath, or something. This is just my own interpretation. It may be totally wrong. But everyone was behind Anne. It was a powerful amount of energy being directed to getting Anne, to lobbying for Anne to be appointed. Now, Diane Feinstein, who was the new Mayor, who became Mayor

M: Because George Moscone was also assassinated.

N: Moscone was assassinated along with Milk. She did not want to appoint Anne Kronenberg because she felt that Anne was too young. I think Anne was like 23. And she would have been the youngest person probably anywhere in the United States to be on a city council, which would have been very interesting, actually. But Feinstein didn't want to do it because she felt she immature. She was under a lot of pressure to appoint Anne

and nobody wanted her to appoint anyone else. As part of that campaign, Harry Britt went to talk to Feinstein, with the specific intent of trying to persuade her to appoint Anne Kronenberg and out of that meeting, no one knows what went on in the meeting, but out of that meeting, she appointed Harry Britt, and Harry Britt accepted.

There was a lot of disgruntled feeling throughout the whole gay community. Men were very upset by it. Probably no one was more upset by it than the political women. So Dell and Phyllis were incensed by it, just absolutely incensed. We were really pissed. I was very upset by it. All of us were. And, of course, Anne was demolished. It was really the end of her in many ways. I think it just knocked her out and she had a real hard time of ever getting passed it, in any kind of public way, anyway.

M: She had been his, one of his aids?

N: She was his key campaign aid and was, she was his campaign manager when he was running. And she became one of his two major aids, the other aid being Walter Cohen.

M: And what, is there anything else about the tape you refer to, and I believe what you said is that Milk mentioned?

N: He named five, I think something like five people, because he said he was afraid that he might be assassinated. If he were, then these would be the people that if it were up to him would be, one of these people would be selected to take his place.

M: And he left five names?

N: And he left five names. It may have been six, but I think it was five. And Anne was one and Harry was another.

So Harry became an enemy of the Lesbian Caucus and the Lesbian Caucus was an enemy of Harry, so I think it's more the other way. The Lesbian Caucus were enemies of Harry. Dell and Phyllis, so Harry was appointed but he had to run for election in the spring of '79 or maybe it was even the fall of '79. I think it may have been fall, I don't remember whether it was the spring or the fall of '79. Dell and Phyllis persuaded all of us, Donna, Sally, Pat, Anne, everybody, to throw our support behind Kay Patchner. Kay Patchner was a straight woman, a kind of neighborhood community activist but also a good democrat. Sort of San Francisco established democrat. She's not very establishment. A pretty fine person in a lot of ways.

M: Can I ask you for a spelling, once again?

N: K-A-Y P-A-T-C-H-N-E-R. They persuaded me to become Kay Patchner's campaign aid and I was her campaign aid along with a very, I don't remember his name, but he was a big bearded guy and he was a Haight Street neighborhood leftist, organizer and very interesting person. Kay and I met with Harry Britt and told him, and I remember when we sat across the table from him, and told him what we were going to do, and that is: run

against him. He said to me, he said well "I know why you are doing what you are doing," and then he turned to Kay and said "but I don't understand why you are doing what you are doing." Kay explained, probably very legibly why she was doing what she was doing. I don't know if this is dragging on or not but it was a very intense campaign and Kay was able to mobilize a lot of the womens' vote and quite a bit of the gay male vote did not vote for Harry Britt. As a matter of fact, the people who elected Harry Britt were the straight people. More gay people voted for Kay Patchner than for Harry Britt. The straight people, however, felt that Harry Britt was the gay person running and that he deserved, because of Harvey Milk's death and so forth, he deserved to be, you know, take his place.

M: What would you say, what is your observation as to why Kay got more of the gay vote?

N: I think that a lot had to do with that reaction to his being the put up, the Feinstein candidate. I think that was mainly it. Harry Britt was a minister and he was a very nice person. I think the funny thing was that he himself became very very depressed when he was elected. He never, it took him a long time, I think finally after maybe his second term or something, he began to really to click. He really didn't have a sense of real connection with a lot of the gay people and political gays too. It was kind of a sad thing and I remember he gained a lot of weight and looked kind of weird. Another quickie on that was that I, in the middle of maybe the last month, I had moved to Berkeley and I was in the beginning of a very intense relationship. I was beginning to feel to some extent that I wasn't all that rabidly sure that Kay was so much better than Harry. I don't remember exactly what the issue was but there was some issue where I felt that Kay should have come out stronger in terms of a gay rights position. I don't know whether it was a gay rights position or whether or not I wanted her to make it really clear what her opposition to Harry was based upon and it had nothing to do with his being gay. I can't remember the exact thing. But I do remember I was feeling more and more kind of alienated from the situation and that I had been sort of put into this position and had let myself be put into it without really understanding whether or not it was really what I wanted to do and again the call of art was strong within me and I was basically doing all of this for nothing. It was all on a voluntary basis, Kay didn't have the money to pay me.

That came to a point when the Iranian revolution came about and I, looking at what was going on on the news, decided that women should demonstrate, because they were putting on the veils. The Ayatollah Khomeiny had said that all women had to put on veils. I called up Roma and between Roma and me we immediately mobilized about 250 women and we did this march down Market Street saying, chanting, "No More Veils, No more Veils." It was a No More Veils demonstration. And we actually marched to the Iranian Embassy and Roma and I went into the Iranian Embassy and were led through the embassy by the new Islamic militants who would not touch us. They would not shake our hand or anything, because that was against the rules for men and women to touch. But they also showed us a lot of things that the Shaw had spies and, you know, that he was a dictator and things like they were trying to show the ways in which he was a dictator, which, of course, he was. I don't know if you ever read Kate Millett's book when she was

there in Iran and that there was a real revolution against the Shaw and that that really got trampled under by the Islamic right wing element.

Whoever his name was and I basically liked him, but he and Kay were incensed that I, they did not like the idea that I was participating in this demonstration and had organized it, and so forth. And that they felt that it was too political a thing to do and they did not want me to do it. They felt that it was too sensitive a thing, they basically were identifying as people of the left who felt it was good that the Shaw had been overthrown. They were not paying any attention to the fact that women were being forced to put on veils all over the place and that indeed what that meant was truly what it did mean which is that women were going to be totally shoved under foot again.

M: This was during her campaign?

N: This was during her campaign, it was something like the third week or something. I just basically had a long talk with Kay, it wasn't that they were pushing me out or anything, but I just basically had a long talk with Kay and I told her that I wanted to continue to help but that I really couldn't help at the level that they had wanted me to. I did continue to help and I was not like the super aid person going in there every single solitary day and working for seven to eight to ten hours for nothing.

I think Dell and Phyllis were upset by that and I don't think it made any difference in terms of Kay's election. I think that she lost by a figure, by a fairly substantial margin. Still, to me, it was the death knoll of my participation in San Francisco politics. It was sort of that was the end of Anne Kronenberg and it was the end of certainly me and in many ways the women who came out of the new trash-heap that women's politics had been turned into by this were Pat Norman, especially, and then what's her name from the East Bay, who is now the head of the city council or something in San Francisco. Who was not involved in any of this, she was sort of in the East Bay and then gradually moved into San Francisco and became active.

M: The Board of Supervisors in San Francisco now is pretty much all men.

N: Carol Migden?

M: Oh, Carol Migden, who became the head of the

N: Carol Migden was never part of the Lesbian Caucus or anything.

M: She is now in the Assembly.

N: The Assembly, right. Of course Gwen Craig became Harry Britt's aid. So that is sort of how things fell out politically.

M: Well, I have a question that some of us have curiosity about when we see people very active in the public affairs taking a lot of time as you have, as to how were you making a living after that period of being paid by the Gay Freedom Day?

N: Well, I wasn't. That was one of the problems. I was paid by Margo St. James through Halloween and I think, I don't even remember what I was doing. I don't know if I was making any money at all. I think that money was beginning to become an issue for me. The fact, I neglected to say that after Harvey died, I was interviewed for the Commission of the Status of Women. I think he sort of died between the first and second interview and I lost by a 6-7, there were fifteen people on the commission or something like that or thirteen people and I lost by a vote of the full commission by one vote. I firmly believe that had Harvey lived, he would have had maybe three more weeks to pull arms or whatever he did. He was a masterful politician. I might have gotten that job and really been able to maintain being in the heyday of San Francisco politics. It was really becoming more and more of a financial drain on me.

M: Yeah, I think it would be and the repercussions of...

N: You know, the thing was, if Kay had won, if I had stuck with her and she had won, I would have been her political aid or something. And, strangely enough, even though political aids have done some wonderful things, for example, Barbara Boxer was a political aid, I still at that time was not particularly interested in being a political aid, you know. I guess I was a little bit too much my own person. So that maybe I just didn't fit well into that framework anyway.

But I was having trouble with that an eventually after not getting a job with the Commission on the Status of Women, and maybe not being employed for awhile, I went into a course where I took computer science and electronics and I became a technical writer in the early 80s. That's how I started supporting myself.

M: Boy, so many repercussions from...

N: Harvey Milk's death.

M: The assassination of Harvey Milk. Thank you so much. OK, Celeste, I am wondering if you were active at all then again with the Gay Freedom Day Parade the next year or did you really taper off in 1979?

N: Right. Well I think the answer is yes to both of them. I really did taper off after I sort of partially withdrew from Kay Patchner's campaign. I went back into the City a lot with friends and also at that point I was the President of the Board of Gay Freedom Day, which was sort of the tradition that if you were co-chair then the next year you became President of the Board. I don't know if that is still the case, but it was then. The one sort of shining part of that for me was that I got to give the invocation that year, 1979. My major memory of '79 was number one, it was huge, it was probably even bigger than '78,

although it did not have as much of the tremendously energized focus and there was a lot of kind of shock and so forth.

M: We should mention that the Briggs Initiative failed...

N: Had been defeated. It was also in many ways celebratory because of that and I think that to me what became very clear in '79 was that we were really at war and there was a cultural war going on, that the cultural war was between the gay people and the gay movement and culture and the Christian right wing. In terms of the gay culture, I think that there were many different expressions of, I would say it was essentially moving toward a kind of political paganism and there was just a really powerful sense of paganism, not so much in a very religious sense but a kind of spirituality that was related to freedom and to environmental stuff; Neighborhood community activism; a kind of a re-definition of the left. Other than that, however, the lesbians had one definition of paganism and the gay men expressed another. With lesbians it was very much an orientation toward the Goddess, toward ritual and certain kind of creativity and song and dance and so forth. With gay men, a tremendous amount of creativity and political focus and a continuing really very strong, almost philosophical orientation toward promiscuity. That it was not just something that gay men

(End of tape 2, side 2)

(Tape 3, side 1 [labeled 5], Celeste Newbrough)

M: This is the third tape, side A of an interview with Celeste Newbrough. I am Marie Kochaver on April 4, the year 2001 at Celeste's home in Berkeley. You were observing some of the cultural ...

N: Warfare.

M: ...warfare of the period of 1979 being based generally in San Francisco.

N: Right. When I was talking about the promiscuity, I certainly don't mean to make any gross generalizations. There were many women who were promiscuous, there were certainly many heterosexuals who were promiscuous and there were many gay men who were not promiscuous. So that my comments should be taken very guardedly, but I do speak in what I felt was a kind of cultural phenomenon and that is that I really think that there was a tremendous amount of a sense of great freedom as though this huge lid had been taken off of gay male sexuality and that gay men were really riding the roller coaster there and I remember talking to the other Randy, not Randy Shilts, but I remember that he used to go to the steam baths every night. And I remember talking to another gay man that I knew very well and whose name I don't remember but I actually went so far as, he would say things like I had slept with, well not slept with but had sex with six men yesterday and so forth. I was really trying to get him to explain to me because, to me, I could not conceive of sleeping with six women, six men, anything. I mean its like it would have just been, I mean, why do it? And the way he explained it to me, I did have

the sense, as I think I mentioned before, that it was a form of brotherhood in some sort of way. That to him it was a form of brotherhood. That was just, there was a very strong aspect of that.

Meanwhile, the lesbians with the Goddess and the rituals and the wiccan and this and that and the gay men with this tremendous creativity and then the tremendous movement toward drag, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence were beginning to really come out, I am sure, in 1979, you know, high visibility. And then in opposition to that just this huge contingent, wherever you looked there were these "Jesus hates you, God hates you, You're going to burn in hell," just vicious, you know, and just a very strong presence of the Christian right from all over the place. It was really war and I give the invocation and it was an invocation of the pagan Goddesses and it was like when I think about that it gives me chills because I know that AIDS was afoot at that time in the population. The really horrible, awful thing was that in that war, AIDS made gay people the losers. That somehow, however, we turned our loss, strangely enough the loss was turned into a victory. Which is really strange because the whole way that AIDS played out was originally this incredible hysteria.

I do have a story that might be worth telling, although it's person in that respect, that in 1982 or '83 when the very very first cases were coming out and people were beginning to really develop these incredibly pernicious cases of AIDS, that Paul Mariah, who I have mentioned before as the founder and owner of Manroot Press, the publisher, he lived in Sonoma with his lover John. He invited me to a party in Sonoma and Paul was there, John was obviously in an advanced case of AIDS and ...

M: Paul Mariah?

N: No, I am sorry, not Paul, his lover. I am trying to think of his lover's name. It was not Paul. I think it may have been John, but I am not sure. I just know that he was a very slight, attractive sort of intelligent looking man who had lots of AIDS stuff going on with his face and everything. Kaposi's Sarcoma. (sp?) And at the end of the party I went to say goodbye to Paul and gave Paul a big hug and then I went to his lover and I reached out to him and he shrunk away from me as though he was ashamed; he did not want me to kiss him, he did not want me to touch him. Because no one really knew how it was transmitted at that time. It was beginning to be thought that it was probably sexual, sexually transmitted, but there really was not that much evidence in any direction and there was all this hysteria. That's when bus drivers were refusing to let gay men on the bus. If they thought they were gay they wouldn't even let them on the bus. He kind of shrunk away from me and I just remember thinking "My God, if I am going to catch AIDS from hugging this man, then I am going to die anyway and everyone else is too." So I just grabbed hold of him and gave him a big kiss on the cheek. And just went away thinking that if I am going to die then the whole world is going to die. If you can't even hug somebody without dying. Over those years, I can say, I have read you all of these names of these men and Cleve has not died yet, right, Cleve is still alive. Right?

M: I have seen him mentioned in one of the free papers recently.

N: Roger died. Randy Shilts died. The other Randy died. So many of these guys that I knew, and of course, Bellue, Tandy Ball? Or something, we are going to get his name. Teddy Matthews died. Tandy Ball, or whatever his first name was, Bellue, the founder of the Gay Freedom Day Marching Band died. And it was truly and completely a plague. It was just incredible and when I think about that little drawing of this queen on Castro Street, I guess that's the contrast that I think I wanted to make. That if you moved from '77 to like '85, or something, you know, this incredible difference in the persona of gay men at that time who were faced with this plague.

M: Right. You have mentioned several names of several women also from the time period we covered, '77,' '78 and '79, do you know...

N: Where they are?

M: ...of the death of any of those women? Just out of comparison.

N: Not one. Priscilla Alexander is alive and in New York. Suzanne, the last time I heard she was alive in Hawaii. Paula Lichtenberg is alive and in San Francisco. I don't know if Iris March is alive or not, I don't. You know, Gwenn may have died. When I think about it, Gwenn, I don't know. Somewhere in my mind, did she die?

M: I wouldn't know, I don't know.

N: Something in my mind, but she may, I don't know. Glenn is still alive, I don't know where Fairrie is; Barbara is still alive.

M: Margo St. James?

N: Is certainly still alive

M: Barbara Cameron?

N: Barbara is still alive.

M: Sally Gearhart?

N: Sally Gearhart is still alive. She's old. Pat, Donna, all of them.

M: Pat Norman, Carmen Vasquez....

N: They are all alive.

M: That is a big difference, isn't it?

N: It is, it's a huge difference. I think that lesbians and gay men came together as a coalition in '77. In '78 it was a real coalition in the sense that they were really trying to work together in an egalitarian way. And I think '78 through the '80s that continued, but it was above all I think it was the AIDS epidemic that really forged the relationship of lesbians and gay men. Because lesbians were really getting a lot of the flack about the AIDS epidemic. For example, there was the hospital in Los Angeles that lesbian's had volunteered to give their blood, this was like in '84, or something, when there was not even, when lesbians were the lowest risk of all groups, I don't know if that's still the case, it may not be if you looked at all the groups, lesbians would be the lowest risk. And they would not let lesbians give blood. This is a hospital, medical people and so forth.

M: I know of a lesbian friend who was harassed out of a job in Minneapolis, a job in a sandwich store or something. Because of the concept of AIDS.

N: So that was one thing that was going on and I think that one thing that gay men understood was that despite that, lesbians never took the position "Well, you're not talking about me, you're talking about them." Lesbians never took that position. Even though we were not the people who had AIDS, we understood that we the people who they hated. We were the people they were talking about. So I think that was a really powerful solidifier and also I think that because lesbians had health, gay men took care of each other incredibly, I know that for a fact. Men who one year were just nothing but joyous drag queens in bars, party after party after party, became nursemaids and became people who cared for people who were dying, year after year.

M: Were you, yourself, involved in personal networks or caring with people who have died of AIDS.

N: I was not a caretaker. I have never been a caretaker until very recently I was forced to be because my partner had cancer. But, being a caretaker has not been an aspect I have understood or been able to bring out in myself. However, I, my partner was a psychologist who did a whole lot of research related, had a lot of jobs that were research related involving AIDS and was from 1984 on was in a very intimate relationship with gay men with AIDS through her job, through her work. She was constantly interviewing men with AIDS, the progression of their disease, etc. Because I knew people like Roger Brooks, I knew contracted AIDS, and I was in touch with Roger over the years, I went to Roger's service. There were several men who I was in touch with over the years or even I wasn't in touch with that I learned that they died, it was very, and mourned over that. Through Ilona's work I actually was in touch with gay men who had AIDS. I would say I was in touch with a lot of men who had AIDS, but not in a care taking role, in a sympathetic role, but not in a care taking role.

M: What about, what else would you want to talk about in your life since, well basically since you talked about moving to the East Bay? Either personally or, I know I met you teaching a seminar about the second wave of feminism. Anything about...?

N: I would say that coming out of the Iranian demonstration and sort of having a wonderful time in 1979 with Gay Freedom Day, I basically began to withdraw and not be that active in the gay movement. I became more active at that time in the feminist movement, sort of re-evolving back into that movement as I had been in the late 60s and the early 70s, through maybe the mid-70s. A lot of that had to do with the fact that there was a lot of anti-feminism going on at that time, especially at the national political levels. The ERA was dying, Regan was elected and so forth. I was very concerned about the Equal Rights Amendment dying without having, you know, not with a bang, but a whimper. I wanted it to die with a bang. So I became involved with San Francisco NOW which at that time the President was Andrea, I don't remember her last name. She's and attorney who has also worked subsequently with a state board. Maybe I'll remember her name later.

M: That's NOW, the National Organization for Women?

N: For women and it was in San Francisco and it was actually at that point a very progressive group of women. I sort of just really became a kind of outside agitator. Started going to the meetings and saying that we should just sort of raise all sorts of hell. And so out of that we planned the Pacific Stock Exchange demonstration which I thought was one of the best and most powerful, well planned demonstrations that I have ever been involved with. And that was that the NOW women all basically chained ourselves to the Pacific Stock Exchange for a whole day and would not be moved, and so forth. We were going to be arrested, but they didn't arrest us, they wouldn't arrest us, or something. I don't remember, I do know this that we did not block the entrance all day. We blocked it for about an hour. And during that period of time there was a tremendous amount of news coverage and so forth, we had a very clear statement. It was a very clear statement about money and the Equal Rights Amendment.

M: What was that, why would you go to the Pacific Stock Exchange?

N: Well, because we felt it was the moneyed interests that were stopping the ERA and that it was the capitalist system. I am sure that if I thought of it more I could think of the very specific argument that we made but...

M: It seems to me insurance companies might have put a lot of money in various things...

N: Yeah, well, equality for women was definitely going to cost them a lot of money. There was no question about that.

M: And what year was this?

N: This was, I think it would be about 1980. And then, 1980 again, we organized another demonstration at the Mormon Temple. And that one was even more clear and we had this huge enormous poster and the poster said "Take Your Money Off Our Rights." Because the Mormons were putting a tremendous amount of money into the anti-ERA campaign.

A few of us, it was actually a vigil on the grounds, so a few of us did, I think that nine of us, did a vigil on the grounds of the Mormon Temple. And just went into the inner lawn of the Mormon Temple and sat down. While the other women, a support demonstration, about 150 women, were marching up and down on the sidewalk in the front of the temple. Again, the minister, I have forgotten what the name of the Mormon, whether it's a priest or a minister, but the pastor came and told us that we were trespassing and then we gave him our little spiel and so he walked away sort of shame-faced and he left us there and finally the women who were doing the demonstration outside, let by Margaret, Margaret is a very important person who was around a lot and she was actually, I think, in the lesbian caucus, she was in the lesbian caucus, she was the assistant to the New York person, Gloria Steinham. (sp?) She was Gloria Steinham's editorial assistant and I don't know if you remember her last name, she was very...

M: Was she part of the editorial board or MS Magazine, Margaret Sloan Hunter?

N: Margaret Sloan Hunter. Margaret decided that she did not like the fact that there was this little peaceful vigil going on inside while all of the rest of the women were outside and so she just led all of the rest of the women in. Pretty soon, because we were supposed to be treating the grounds of the temple as being "sacred," but she just led the women in and so there was thus huge demonstration of women that went all through the grounds of the temple. Thanks to Margaret. I was trying to do a peaceful, you know one of these nonviolent actions, it was going to be a nonviolent action.

M: Did you expect arrests, or...?

N: We didn't know what was going to happen. We were prepared, those of us who did it were prepared to be arrested. But we weren't arrested. It was interesting. In neither case was anyone arrested.

The Mormon Temple demonstration I think was very effective. And finally on the year that the ERA died, I think it was '81 or something or maybe '82, I think it was '81. It actually died very close to July the 4th. And so on July the 4th, a group of us, and I have a picture of that demonstration, it included Artemis March is in here somewhere but here is me and Priscilla, here's Andrea, here's Lo Curto (sp?). Lo Curto was involved all through, all along.

M: How would you spell her name?

N: L-O C-U-R-T-O. She was an artist. And this was Cory and I think this may have been Artemis but at any rate we all dressed up in black with red, white, and blue strap across us and chained ourselves together and walked all through Crissy Fields and all around the City on July 4th where everybody was out picnicking and everything. It was the only demonstration where everybody was running up to get the fliers. We weren't trying to push fliers, people were running up. And it was basically our mourning for the ERA. Those were three demonstrations in the early 80s that I participated in and felt very good about even though I didn't feel good about the death of the ERA.

M: Did you have press coverage, I am glad to see these pictures.

N: Enormous. There was press coverage of all three of them. The Pacific Stock Exchange was on like the second page of the paper with a big picture. The Mormon demonstration, the Mormon Temple demonstration was again photographic coverage. This one was not covered, I don't think, the one on the 4th of July.

M: Well, hopefully, we can have copies of these pictures with the tapes.

N: Yeah, I think that, this is just a real current picture. It was actually taken in New Orleans, just a week ago.

M: Oh good, I was hoping we could have.

N: But not maybe some current picture. But this is a picture of Priscilla and Suzanne in one of the meetings of, probably between '77 and '78, we were all agitating on one of those things.

M: One of those rooms with posters on the wall of liberation....

N: Exactly, right. As I was going to say, sort of wrapping things down, I think that subsequently to that I was involved in the mid-80s in a very strong way, '84 and '85 with an organization BABMA, Bay Area Birth Mother's Association. And that was in reference to the child that I had relinquished when I was in my early 20s and that was a very effective group in fighting for adoption consciousness around adoption rights. And made some very strong friendships that I still have in that particular group and also did several radio programs around adoption through KPFA.

Then in the late-80s, when EXXON, during the EXXON oil spill I was involved over at the University of California with Carolyn Merchant who teaches environmental history there and helped to organize several of her classes to do a demonstration on the Berkeley campus against EXXON. And considering that Berkeley was getting to be more and more conservative I thought that was a valiant effort to sort of reenact some of the more militant radical days.

And then later on decided to try and pull together some material on lesbian culture and the second wave of feminism and share that with other women and also learn from them. And that is where we met. That later became a one semester course at City College and then I had to move out of the City so it ended.

I guess that's sort of a summary of my activism, except for the most activist part which was in the late 60s and early 70s. Hopefully maybe cover that at another time and another place.

M: OK, Celeste, thank you very much. I know you must be tired. I wanted to focus particularly on some of you active involvement in this area and I really appreciate that and there are a lot of other things about you and your life that maybe we can do at another time.

N: Right, that sounds good. OK, thank you Marie.

(End of tape 3, side 1)

HIGHLIGHTS OF ORAL HISTORY

Co-chair and coordinator

Gay Freedom Day 1978

President/Gave Invocation

GAY LESBIAN FREEDOM DAY, 1979

FEMINIST/GAY ACTIVIST

MEMBER BAY AREA LESBIAN CAUCUS

1978 - 84

TAUGHT LESBIAN CULTURAL HISTORY
AT SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE

Photographs for
Ceceste Newbrough
Oral History



1968 CELESTE, ANITA NEUBRUCH (MAYO) and WILLIAM BEALING II CR.

CELESTE NEWBROOK, MIDDLE
SUZANNE _____, LEFT
CHRIS _____, RIGHT

1978 GAY FREEDOM DAY

CELESTE & CHRIS CO-CHAIRERS
1978 GLFD COMMITTEE



CELESTE NEWBROOGH, MIDDLE
PRISILLA ALEXANDER, LEFT
SUZANNE _____, RIGHT

GLBT Historical Society
<http://www.glbthistory.org>

1977 Planning Meeting
No m 6 DEMONSTRATION



GAY
FREEDOM DAY
1979 CELEBRATION

GLBT Historical Society
<http://www.glbthistory.org>
① CELESTE NEWBROUGH, MIDDLE - GABE INVOCATION!
LARRY — (VERY ACTIVE IN 1960s & 1970s), LEFT
ROGER PARKER, RIGHT

①



②



② Lyle Roberts, Left
CELESTE NEWBROUGH, RIGHT

1981 FOURTH OF JULY

END OF ERA DEMONSTRATION



↑
Maie
LoCorto

CELESTE
NEWBROUGh

↓
ANDEA
W.
(N.O.W.
PRES.)

↓
Prisille
Alexander



CELESTE
1956
AGE 17



CELESTE
&
ILONA
ON
20TH
ANNIVERSARY
1997